

VISTA TRANSIT

PARATRANSIT RIDERS' GUIDE



Sierra Vista

EXTRAORDINARY SKIES.
UNCOMMON GROUND.



Be a frequent rider!



Sierra Vista
T R A N S I T



The Vista Transit *Paratransit Riders' Guide* can be provided to you in a variety of accessible formats such as, CD, braille, or large print. If you need any written information provided to you in one of these accessible formats, please contact us at **(520) 417-4888** or by email at **TitleVI@SierraVistaAZ.gov**.

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GENERAL INFORMATION



Vista Transit is a public transportation system, dedicated to providing a high quality, efficient, safe, secure, and affordable transportation accessible to all residents of the City of Sierra Vista. Our buses serve more than 50 locations across Sierra Vista and Fort Huachuca. Vista Transit operates in compliance with all federal transit regulations and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), a civil rights law, was designed to remove the barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from fully participating in American society. Vista Transit offers origin-to-destination paratransit service for passengers who have disabilities that create a barrier to riding the regular, fixed-route buses. Under the ADA, Vista Transit is required to provide origin-to-destination, demand-responsive paratransit service that offers similar service to the fixed-route service for time and location. The service is for persons with physical, cognitive, emotional, visual, or other sensory disabilities who do not have the functional ability to safely navigate or ride the fixed-route buses, either temporarily or permanently.

GENERAL INFORMATION

In addition, the fixed-route buses are fully accessible. Other accommodations such as bus stop and route announcements, and easy-to-read signs, make using the fixed-route buses possible for the disabled. Everyone is encouraged to use the fixed-route buses whenever possible. However, the unavailability of fixed-route service does not constitute eligibility for paratransit service.

ADA requires paratransit services be available to all passengers who reside within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the fixed-route system. Vista Transit has extended paratransit services to include all areas within the city limits of Sierra Vista and Fort Huachuca.

Travel lessons are available to those who need additional help navigating the fixed-route bus system.

Please contact the Transit Center at **(520) 417-4888** for information or to arrange a lesson.

To qualify for paratransit service, you must complete an application and submit it to Vista Transit. Your doctor, social worker, or other health care professional must provide written verification of a disability for paratransit service to be authorized. Applications are available at Vista Transit, located at 2050 E. Wilcox Drive, by calling Vista Transit at **(520) 417-4888**, or on our website at VistaTransit.org.

Paratransit Eligibility

Under ADA, disability alone does not qualify a person to ride paratransit. A person's disability must be a significant hinderance or barrier to using the fixed-route system. Paratransit service is provided to the following three general groups of persons with disabilities:

- A person with a disability who cannot navigate the transit system without assistance.
- A person with a disability who requires an accessible vehicle when one is not available. *Please note, all Vista Transit fixed-route buses and all bus stops are ADA accessible. Therefore, this criterion is generally not met within the Vista Transit service area.*
- A person with a disability who is unable to reach the transit stop, or cannot board, ride, or exit from the fixed-route buses.

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ADA paratransit eligibility can be either conditional or unconditional. If there are any conditions of paratransit eligibility, they will be explained in your determination letter. Those persons who are certified eligible are classified as having unconditional, temporary, or conditional eligibility for ADA paratransit service as described in Section 9.3 of the FTA ADA Circular:

- **Unconditional Eligibility:** An individual who is unable to use fixed route transit services under any circumstances requires unconditional eligibility, allowing the individual to make all trips using Vista Transit's paratransit service.
- **Conditional Eligibility:** An individual may be able to use the fixed route system for some trips. Transit agencies can establish conditional eligibility for those individuals and would only be obligated to provide paratransit services for those trips that the individuals cannot make using fixed route, based on the conditions of the particular trip [Section 37.123(b)].
- **Temporary Eligibility:** Temporary eligibility, for a defined period of time, can be granted to individuals who experience a temporary loss of functional ability that prevents them from using fixed route service [Section 37.123(c)]. For example, an individual may need to undergo two months of treatment for a health condition, resulting in severe fatigue that prevents use of the fixed route service for the duration of the treatment.

Eligibility in any one of these categories is based on your current physical and/or cognitive functional ability to ride Vista Transit buses safely. Eligibility is not based on your age, the purpose of your trip, financial resources, ability to drive, your type of disability or medical diagnosis, having an oversized mobility aid, or having no bus service where you live.

ADA paratransit eligibility is determined by reasonable access to transportation and is not made solely on disability or medical conditions.

Personal assistants (caretakers) can accompany the disabled passenger for no charge. However, any other accompanying passengers must pay the fare for paratransit service (if applicable), providing there is room.



Scheduling a ride

Paratransit is available during the same hours as fixed-route services. Reservations must be made at least one day before your trip, up to seven (7) days in advance. There are no limits on how many trips you may make in one day. Vista Transit cannot accommodate same day changes. Paratransit requests can be made by calling or texting **(520) 417-4888**. Messages are checked on Monday morning, or the first business day if Monday is a holiday, for any requests received over the weekend.

When making a reservation, it may not always be possible to be picked up at your preferred time. Your reservation specialist will provide you with an alternative time within 60 minutes of your request. The current standard is rides are offered within 30 minutes of preferred time, but this is not a guarantee. For example, if you request a pickup at 10 a.m. from the library to home, you may be offered a pickup time of 10:25 a.m.

GENERAL INFORMATION



If you must arrive at a location *before* a certain time, please inform your reservation specialist. You may be given a time that will require you to wait at your destination for up to 60 minutes. The current standard is rides are offered within 30 minutes of preferred time, but this is not a guarantee. For example, if you have a doctor's appointment at 10 a.m., you may be picked up at 8:55 a.m. and dropped off at 9:05 a.m.

We acknowledge some trips are difficult to know when you will be finished, such as grocery shopping. You may request a Will-Call in combination with a scheduled pickup time. Although it is standard practice to pick up within 30 minutes of a Will-Call request, please allow for up to 60 minutes. Will-Call service ends at 3 p.m. on regular service days.

On a case-by-case basis, you may make a subscription appointment. This is commonly done for those going to and from work and for regularly scheduled treatment for chronic diseases, such as dialysis.

Vista Transit does not offer priority scheduling based on the purpose of your trip.

Getting Picked Up

You may be picked up in either a Vista Transit bus (blue & green with full body logo) or in a wheelchair van (all white with Sierra Vista branding on door only). Your vehicle will be at your location up to 15 minutes before or 15 minutes after your scheduled pickup time. The driver will only wait up to three (3) minutes for you, before proceeding on to their next pickup. Please be outside waiting for your driver during this time.

During inclement weather, our drivers will do their best to park in such a way they are visible from windows to minimize your discomfort outside. This is only a courtesy.

No-Shows and Cancellations

Cancellations are the only same-day changes we can make. If you have made other arrangements to travel, please call the Transit Center to cancel your trip. If a passenger has scheduled a paratransit pickup and misses the bus, the passenger will be recorded as a no-show. A pattern or practice of late cancellations or no-shows may result in suspension of service.

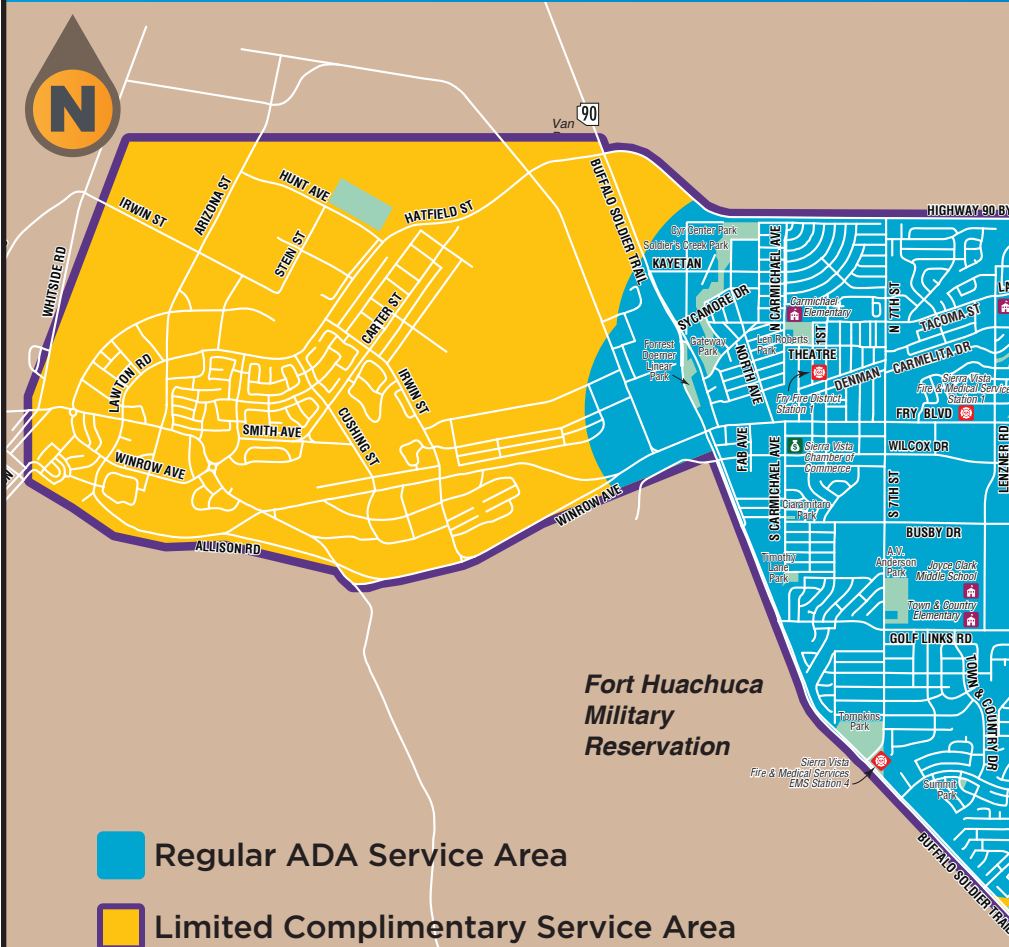
Per policy, reservations and changes must be made at least one day in advance.

A no-show occurs when a customer does not board the vehicle within three minutes of the vehicle's arrival within the 30-minute pickup window.

A late cancellation occurs when a customer cancels a trip less than two hours before the start of the 30-minute pickup window.

In any calendar month, any customer who has booked 10 trips or more and has no-showed or late-cancelled at least 10% of those trips will receive a suspension notice. A trip cancelled more than two hours before the start of the pickup window or caused by factors outside the control of the passenger will not be considered. A customer will be subject to suspension only if both the minimum number of trips booked and the minimum percentage of no shows or late cancellations are reached during the calendar month.

PARATRANSIT



**Fort Huachuca
Military
Reservation**



VistaTransit.org

GENERAL INFORMATION

All suspension periods will begin on a Monday. The length of a customer's suspension will adhere to the following schedule:

- **First violation in the calendar year:** customer receives a warning letter
- **Second violation:** 7-day (1-week) suspension, effective the first Monday after 10 calendar days of the letter date
- **Third violation:** 14-day (2-week) suspension, effective the first Monday after 10 calendar days of the letter date
- **Fourth violation:** 21-day (3-week) suspension, effective the first Monday after 10 calendar days of the letter date
- **Fifth and subsequent violations:** 28-day (4-week) suspension, effective the first Monday after 10 calendar days of the letter date

Suspensions under this section may be appealed. If you would like to appeal a suspension under this process, please see the section below, "Appeals Process."

Visitors with Paratransit Services at Home

Visitors may enjoy paratransit service for up to 21 days within a period of one (1) year, starting from the date of the first (1st) paratransit ride. Vista Transit accepts documentation of paratransit service eligibility from other jurisdictions (such as Sun Tran), medical documentation, or observation of an apparent disability.

For paratransit service beyond 21 days within one (1) year, you will be required to apply for permanent or temporary eligibility. Applications are available at Vista Transit, located at 2050 E. Wilcox Drive, by calling Vista Transit at **(520) 417-4888**, or on our website at VistaTransit.org.

All other rules in this *Paratransit Riders' Guide* apply to visitors.



Service Animals and Pets

The State of Arizona recognizes a service animal as any dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or any other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. Service animals are required to be leashed or harnessed except when performing work or tasks where such tethering would interfere with the animal's ability to perform.

Animals whose sole function is the provision of comfort, companionship or personal security are not considered service animals under ADA regulations.

All other animals must be contained in a leak-proof carrier, unable to escape.

All animals must be declared to the bus driver at the time of boarding.

All dogs, including service dogs, must be licensed with the Nancy J. Brua Animal Care Center or another animal control entity. The animal care center is located at 6799 E. Hwy 90 and can be reached at **(520) 458-4151**. For animals that do not receive a license, proof of vaccination status is required.

With proof of licensure or vaccination status, you may request an Animal Ride Pass from the Transit Center. This pass will allow you to board more quickly and will expire at the same time as the license or vaccination.

All animals must be well-behaved and house broken. Any animal, including a service animal, that is observed as being hostile may be prohibited from riding in the future without further notification.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Step 1: The Application

Please fill out the forms completely. Incomplete forms may delay the eligibility determination. You may complete the application yourself, or you may have someone help you. If someone else assists you, please have them fill out the information in Part A.

Please sign the application form in Part A.

Step 2: Information Verification

Vista Transit may need to contact your physician or other health care provider for additional information. Please ensure the name and phone number of the health care professional who can verify your functional abilities and limitations is provided. Although it is not required, you may submit any additional information you feel would help to clarify your functional ability or inability to use Vista Transit buses (such as a letter from your doctor or other professional reference). However, any such statements should specifically address your current functional abilities regarding the use of Vista Transit buses and not be merely a “prescription” for service or a statement of your medical diagnosis. You will still need to complete the entire application even if you submit a doctor’s statement.

Step 3: Functional Abilities Testing

After submitting your application, you may be asked to participate in an in-person interview discussing your physical, cognitive, or visual abilities if more information is necessary to determine if you have the functional ability to use Vista Transit. The in-person interview helps determine whether an applicant is able to use fixed-route buses, and if so, under what circumstances. The interview consists of a series of questions designed to evaluate the functional abilities, limitations, and individual needs of each applicant. Variables in the environment, as well as the applicant’s ability to perform the tasks required to use the bus, are also considered. Vista Transit offers a courtesy pickup and drop-off for this purpose.

APPLICATION PROCESS



Step 4: Mobility Device Information

The ADA law requires fixed-route and paratransit vehicles to be able to accommodate, at a minimum, mobility devices which are 30 inches wide by 48 inches long in size. Some vehicles may be able to accommodate larger sizes. Vista Transit limits total mobility device, plus passenger weight, to 1,000 pounds. It may be necessary for Vista Transit to verify the size and weight of the mobility aid, while occupied, to determine whether the device and passenger can be safely accommodated on a paratransit service bus.

Step 5: Eligibility Determination

After you complete and submit your application, Vista Transit will review all the information available and notify you by U.S. mail of your paratransit eligibility determination within 21 days. It is not necessary to contact Vista Transit while your application is being processed. ADA Paratransit Eligibility determinations are not given out over the phone. You will be contacted if any additional information is needed or if any further action is required on your part.

Vista Transit tries to provide a response within three to five days. If, by a date 21 days following the submission of a complete application, the entity has not made a determination of eligibility, the applicant shall be treated as eligible and provided service until and unless Vista Transit denies the application. This is presumptive eligibility: FTA Circular 4710.1—Americans With Disabilities Act Guidance (see 9.5.1).

Please Note: While all these steps may not be necessary for every applicant, by signing and submitting the application you are agreeing to comply with any of the above steps that may be necessary to determine your eligibility for Vista Transit curbside services.

APPEALS PROCESS



If you have been denied unconditional paratransit services or if you have been suspended under the No-Show or Cancellation Policy, you have the right to appeal that decision with the City's ADA Coordinator or the Vista Transit Supervisor within 60 days.

Individuals can submit appeals in whatever format they choose. If requested as an accommodation, a letter will be filled out on an individual's behalf or can be accepted in alternative formats such as large print, audio recording, or braille. You may request an appeal to be made in-person with either the ADA Coordinator at Sierra Vista City Hall or the Vista Transit Supervisor at the Vista Transit Center.

Appeals shall be submitted to the City ADA Coordinator at 1011 N. Coronado Drive, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635 or via email at ADA@SierraVistaAZ.gov. Appeals submitted at Vista Transit, or any other facility shall promptly be transmitted to the ADA Coordinator who will contact the applicant to acknowledge receipt. The ADA Coordinator will begin review of the appeal within 10 days of receipt.

The ADA Coordinator, who is not involved with paratransit determination, will review both the paratransit application and appeal to ensure the eligibility determination was made in strict compliance with both FTA regulations and Vista Transit eligibility requirements.

APPEALS PROCESS



The ADA Coordinator has authority to amend eligibility procedures if they are discovered to be non-compliant with FTA and ADA regulations. If such a determination is made, eligibility will be reassessed according to FTA and ADA regulations, while Vista Transit amends its policies. Once a decision is made, Vista Transit or the ADA Coordinator will provide the applicant with its decision including specific and detailed reasons for the decision. This decision will be provided in accessible formats upon request.

If the appellant is appealing service suspension due to a pattern or practice of no-shows, ADA paratransit will be provided until a decision has been made by the ADA Coordinator. Vista Transit is not required to provide ADA paratransit while an appellant is appealing an eligibility decision. However, if a decision has not been made within 30 days, Vista Transit shall provide paratransit services until a decision is issued.

For more information on the City of Sierra Vista/Vista Transit's civil rights program, and the procedures to file an appeal, contact the Transit Supervisor **(520) 417-4888**, or visit the Transit Center at 2050 E. Wilcox Drive, Sierra Vista. For more information, visit [VistaTransit.org](https://www.vistatransit.org).

ADA COMPLAINT PROCESS



It is established policy that the City of Sierra Vista and its employees shall comply with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The City of Sierra Vista/Vista Transit operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, national origin, or disability in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Any person who believes she or he has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with the City of Sierra Vista/Vista Transit within 180 days.

ADA complaint forms can be found on the City's website (SierraVistaAZ.gov) or upon request. Use of a form is not required; individuals can submit complaints in whatever format they choose. If requested as an accommodation, a form will be filled out on an individual's behalf.

Complaints shall be submitted to the City ADA Coordinator at 1011 N. Coronado Drive, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635 or via email at ADA@SierraVistaAZ.gov. Complaints submitted at Vista Transit, or any other facility shall promptly be transmitted to the ADA Coordinator who will contact the complainant to acknowledge receipt.

ADA COMPLAINT PROCESS

The ADA Coordinator will promptly forward all complaints to the Department and/or Division Head to begin the investigation process. The ADA Coordinator will work with the Department and/or Division Head and prepare a written response to the complainant within 10 business days. If additional time is needed to prepare a response, the complainant shall be notified of the status on a regular basis.

The complainant shall be notified of the final findings and corrective action within 20 business days of receipt of the complaint. This notification shall include, if determined to be necessary, a timetable for the completion of said corrective action.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the findings of the Transit Supervisor or ADA Coordinator, the complainant may request the City Manager review the complaint, or they can file a separate complaint with the US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20530-0001 or online at [ADA.gov](https://www.ada.gov).

Complaints and all related documentation shall be retained by the ADA Coordinator for a period of no less than five years from the date of submission.

For more information on the City of Sierra Vista/Vista Transit's civil rights program, and the procedures to file a complaint, visit [VistaTransit.org](https://www.vistatransit.org); contact the Transit Supervisor at **(520) 417-4888**; or visit the Transit Center at 2050 E. Wilcox Drive, Sierra Vista.

A separate complaint may be filed with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) by filing a complaint directly with the corresponding offices of Civil Rights: FTA: ATTN: Complaint Team, East Building, 5th Floor-TCR, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.



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VistaTransit.org